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INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9604  
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 1168  
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 3802  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0915  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 6206  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9324  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 1857  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 2849  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 0152  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 8186  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 018778

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TAGS: [AF](#) [EAID](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: OPTIMISTIC VIEW ON PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS FROM MFA

Classified By: CDA Peter W. Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The MFA Afghanistan Director told PolOff September 20 that high level engagement between Pakistani and Afghan leaders would continue through the autumn and was, he hoped, becoming institutionalized. The official reported that Presidents Karzai and Musharraf would meet on September 26 in New York and added that Musharaff's UNGA speech was designed to assure President Karzai that the GOP was committed to fighting the Taliban. End Summary.

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High Level Engagement Continuing  
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¶2. (C) PolOff met with MFA (Afghanistan) Director Amir Shaukat on September 20. Amir was quite optimistic about the direction of Pak-Afghan relations and cited President Musharraf's UNGA address the night before as evidence the GOP was committed to improving relations with Afghanistan. He singled out Musharraf's reference to the Taliban's being the enemy of both Pakistan and Afghanistan as an attempt to assure President Karzai that the GOP was committed to stopping the Taliban. Amir added that Presidents Karzai and Musharraf would hold a bilateral discussion on September 26, the day before the U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral.

¶3. (C) Amir was pleased with recent developments in high-level dialogues and was particularly excited by an upcoming (but still unscheduled) visit by the Speaker of Afghanistan's lower house, Younis Qanooni. The GOP's analysis was that Qanooni was attempting to become more of a leader and statesman than just a politician. Pakistani leaders had been particularly impressed with Qanooni's use of his office to squelch a draft bill that would have criticized Pakistan for the death of Baloch leader Nawab Bugti.

¶4. (C) Other meetings planned for after Ramadan include:

--FM Kasuri and FM Spanta, who last met in June. (During a pull aside at the Economic Cooperation Organization meeting in Baku in May, the two FMs promised to meet quarterly, but had to postpone the September bilateral until after Ramadan because of UNGA and NAM travel.)

--The Pak-Afghan Joint Economic Committee, which last met at the ministerial level June 14-15.

--The ministerial level Tripartite Refugee Committee (Afghanistan, Pakistan and UNHCR,) which met May 30 and September 12.

--A study tour to Afghanistan of Pakistani journalists.

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Comment  
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15. (C) In a land of pessimists, Amir is a refreshing optimist, especially on Pak-Afghan cooperation. Embassy Kabul, who cleared this cable, notes that Amir's comments on Qanooni's possible transformation from political operative to statesman may indeed be optimistic, but the Embassy welcomes any attempts at fence-building.  
BODDE